

HOUSE BILL 3810

By Fitzhugh

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 1; Title 49, Chapter 2; Title 49, Chapter 3 and Title 49, Chapter 5, relative to teacher compensation.

WHEREAS, the future of Tennessee depends on the vitality of its economic development and the educational attainment of the citizens of this great state; and

WHEREAS, the future of high quality education in Tennessee rests with each school system's ability to attract and retain highly qualified professionals; and

WHEREAS, almost annually a number of highly qualified and extraordinarily effective Tennessee teachers who have been proclaimed by the Tennessee department of education as Teachers of the Year leave the profession to pursue other opportunities due to low pay; and

WHEREAS, countless Tennessee public school teachers work second jobs to make ends meet and scant few of the best and brightest students whom this state and nation produce choose a teaching career in public education, primarily due to the extremely low wages paid teachers in comparison to their equally educated fellow professionals; and

WHEREAS, the continued lack of recognition at both the local and state level of the need to compensate teachers at a level commensurate with their fellow professionals has undoubtedly resulted in the abysmal quality of public education in Tennessee and will continue to be an Achilles heel to our economic development initiatives; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee must develop and fund an ambitious and effective new pay scale for professional educators that will not only retain our highly qualified teachers but also attract the best and brightest students to the public school teaching ranks; and

WHEREAS, to compete in the global marketplace, Tennessee must aggressively seek a path toward excellence by attracting and retaining high quality teachers by offering a world

quality pay scale or sit idle and watch our educational attainment levels and employment opportunities be surpassed by our fellow states and distant nations who will profit from our lack of effort; and

WHEREAS, to determine this new pay scale, Tennessee must engage a commission to be charged with coming together to develop such a plan and comprised of the heads of our leading educational institutions, the leaders of our major employers, the leaders of our public education boards at the elementary, secondary and postsecondary levels, and professional educators themselves to be led by our most prominent statesmen who have dedicated themselves to high quality education for all Tennessee's students; now, therefore,
BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1.

(a) There is created the K-12 teacher compensation commission. The commission shall examine teacher compensation and compensation issues to recommend salary and benefit levels that would attract and retain highly qualified and competent persons in careers as public school teachers. In examining teacher compensation, the commission shall study and review:

(1) Salary and benefit levels for public school teachers in grades kindergarten through twelve (K-12) that will attract the best and brightest students to teaching careers;

(2) Compensation in other states; particularly in surrounding states and states in the southeast region of the country;

(3) Compensation in other industrialized nations, particularly in nations known for excellence in their public education systems;

(4) Compensation of other professionals with comparable training;

(5) Entry level pay for professionals in the state and in surrounding states;

(6) Cost-of-living factors in different areas of the state;

(7) Compensation sufficient to permit teachers to pursue teaching as a profession, without the necessity of working second jobs;

(8) Teacher turn-over rates, particularly within the ranks of highly effective and less experienced teachers, and the reasons that teachers leave the profession and the viability of retention bonuses or tenure bonuses; and

(9) Other relevant factors and issues as determined by the commission.

(b) The membership of the commission shall be composed of:

(1) The commissioner of education, or the commissioner's designee;

(2) The commissioner of economic and community development, or the commissioner's designee;

(3) A representative of the Tennessee Business Roundtable;

(4) The chief executive officer of Nissan North America, or the chief executive officer's designee;

(5) The chief executive officer of Federal Express, or the chief executive officer's designee;

(6) The chief executive officer of Volkswagen Group of America, or the chief executive officer's designee;

(7) The laboratory director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, or the director's designee;

(8) The chief executive officer of Hospital Corporation of America, or the chief executive officer's designee;

(9) The chief executive officer of the Tennessee valley authority, or the chief executive officer's designee;

(10) The president of the University of Tennessee, or the president's designee;

- (11) The chancellor of the board of regents, or the chancellor's designee;
- (12) The president of the University of Memphis, or the president's designee;
- (13) The president of Middle Tennessee State University, or the president's designee;
- (14) The chancellor of the University of Tennessee – Knoxville, or the chancellor's designee;
- (15) The chancellor of Vanderbilt University, or the chancellor's designee;
- (16) The chair of the state board of education;
- (17) The chair of the board of trustees of the University of Tennessee system;
- (18) The chair of the board of regents;
- (19) The chair of the Tennessee higher education commission;
- (20) The president of the Tennessee Education Association, or the president's designee;
- (21) The president of the Professional Educators of Tennessee, or the president's designee;
- (22) The Tennessee president of the American Federation of Teachers, or the president's designee; and
- (23) A representative of each of the following chambers of commerce:
 - (A) Chattanooga;
 - (B) Jackson area;
 - (C) Knoxville;
 - (D) Memphis;
 - (E) Nashville; and

(F) Tri-Cities regional.

(c) Such commission must be chaired by individuals who have displayed their commitment to public education on the state and national stage. The governor is requested to seek commitments from the Honorable Phil Bredesen and the Honorable Bill Frist to serve as co-chairs.

(d) The comptroller's office of research and education accountability shall serve as staff to the commission, provide research assistance and prepare the final report issued by the commission.

(e) The commission's final report and recommended pay scale shall be accompanied by any fiscal data generated and utilized by the entity in determining and setting the scale.

(f) All appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the commission upon request of the chairs.

(g) The commission shall be convened by the chairs no later than August 1, 2012, and at its first meeting elect a vice-chair and such other officers the commission deems necessary.

(h) The commission shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the one hundred eighth general assembly no later than March 1, 2013, at which time the commission shall cease to exist.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring

it.